

ASSEMBLY HOMELAND SECURITY AND STATE
PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3850

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 16, 2020

The Assembly Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3850.

As reported by the committee, this bill allows public bodies to conduct meetings by electronic means during periods of emergency.

The provisions of the bill explicitly authorize a public body to conduct a meeting and public business, cause a meeting to be open to the public, vote, and receive public comment by means of communication or other electronic equipment during a state of emergency, public health emergency, or state of local disaster emergency. The bill also allows a public body to provide notice of meetings electronically through the internet during that time, but requires that public bodies who exercise this option limit, to the extent practicable, the public business conducted at that meeting to matters necessary for the continuing operation of government and that relate to the applicable emergency declaration. The bill does not modify any current authorization under law to do anything permitted under the bill during periods when such declarations of emergency are not in effect.

“Public body” is defined under the “Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act” to be a commission, authority, board, council, committee or any other group of two or more persons organized under the laws of this State, and collectively empowered as a voting body to perform a public governmental function affecting the rights, duties, obligations, privileges, benefits, or other legal relations of any person, or collectively authorized to spend public funds including the Legislature, but does not mean or include the judicial branch of the government, any grand or petit jury, any parole board or any agency or body acting in a parole capacity, the State Commission of Investigation, the Apportionment Commission established under Article IV, Section III, of the Constitution, or any political party committee organized under Title 19 of the Revised Statutes.